

ADDRESS OF J. STROM THURMOND, GOVERNOR OF SOUTH CAROLINA,
TO THE STATE TEACHERS' CONVENTION AT THE COLUMBIA TOWNSHIP
AUDITORIUM, COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA, MARCH 18, 1948, 8:00 PM.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Guests, and Ladies and Gentlemen:

The field of education lies close to my heart. Before I became your Governor, I was a teacher of agriculture, and later I served as Superintendent of Education for Edgefield County.

I can think of no nobler, no more influential profession than teaching. In your hands lies the future of our State and our Nation. Almost every child in South Carolina will, at some time during his life, attend a publicly-supported school. You teachers will have, in large degree, the shaping of the minds of the children, who will become the citizens of tomorrow. Your responsibility is great; your opportunities are even greater.

As Alexander Pope so wisely wrote: "'Tis education forms the common mind: Just as the twig is bent, so the tree's inclined."

We Americans are the best educated people of the world. This is a mighty tribute to our public-education system. All of us recognize the indispensability of public education. However, it is a shocking anomaly that teachers, who constitute one of our most vital professions, have so long remained so poorly compensated.

I have made it a special point during my administration to see that public education is given generous treatment. The South Carolina General Assembly, I am happy to say, has gone along wholeheartedly with me. The Legislature has passed the most progressive and constructive educational legislation in the

history of our State. With pride and appreciation, I would like to cite to you some of the Legislature's accomplishments:

It authorized a badly needed survey of the public schools of the State as a means of meeting present-day needs. It established permanently a State-supported 9-months school term. It authorized the best schedule for teachers' salaries which has ever been provided in South Carolina. It reorganized the State Department of Education to promote efficiency. It established a State system of Area Trade Schools to train the skilled technicians which will be necessary in the industrial era which stands before us. It authorized the State to pay the salaries of County Superintendents of Education. It increased appropriations for educational services such as vocational education, Negro education, adult education, and transportation of school pupils. It passed an Institutions Building Act which enabled the State to make capitol improvements of far-reaching importance at State institutions of higher learning, including the construction of a sorely-needed teaching hospital for the Medical College of South Carolina. The present General Assembly has shown in deeds its devotion to public education.

The Committee appointed to survey our Public School System has already made considerable progress. It is studying such matters as courses in instruction, personnel, organization and administration, plants and equipment, transportation of pupils, and finances. It is gathering facts generally, and the facts gathered so far indicate that a certain amount of stream-lining will be necessary to meet present day needs. The Committee will publish its findings next Fall.

Recently there has been some agitation against the 12-year school program. I want to tell you tonight that I will vigorously oppose any steps designed to reduce the 12-year plan. We have long needed to add an extra year to the public schools. It cannot be denied that students who have completed 12 grades in school are better educated, and better equipped to go out into the world, than those who have attended only 11 years. They are more mature. They are able to profit by more advanced courses. So far as the State Department of Education is able to ascertain, only 25 to 30 percent of South Carolina high school graduates attend college. We owe to our boys and girls who are economically unable to go away from their homes to attend college the opportunity of studying an extra year in high school.

You have also heard agitation for the freezing of teachers' salaries. Even though South Carolina teachers are now paid more than they ever were before, I hope that it will be possible for their salaries to be increased in the future. I am against any move to freeze their salaries. The State's stake in the education of our youth is certainly important enough to warrant our securing for them the best possible teachers. We cannot secure those teachers if we cannot pay them adequately.

I wish to express to you teachers the gratitude of the State of South Carolina for the work you are doing. Your calling gives satisfaction which cannot be over-emphasized. So long as I am Governor, education will always have a staunch friend and supporter in the State House.

Education is one part of the great field of information. We in America are singularly blessed in the quality and amount of information made

available to us by our free press. American journalists are the most objective, the most careful, and the most complete news reporters in the world. Diligent in their research, fearless in their inquiry, they are guardians of our liberties.

One of the finest examples of the American journalist was Raymond Clapper. He was a truly great reporter. American journalism lost a shining practitioner of an art when he gave his life in the Pacific during the war.

His wife, who was his collaborator during his life, is with us here tonight. She has made her own mark in journalism. A successful author, an editor of Look Magazine, she has become widely-known for her thoughtful writing.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce to you our speaker for this evening---Olive Clapper.

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